Message Text

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PINT MOPS ECON ELAB EIND EINV EFIN VS

SUBJ: SAIGON, CITY WITHOUT JOY

SUMMARY: SAIGON IS A DRAB PLACE TODAY. UNEMPLOYMENT IS CHRONIC, PEOPLE ARE BEING FORCED INTO THE COUNTRYSIDE AND CORRUPTION STILL PREVAILS AMONG PUBLIC OFFICIALS. THERE WERE THE IMPRESSIONS OF AN EIGHTEEN-YEAR-OLD VIETNAMESE GIRL WITH FRENCH NATIONALITY WHO DEPARTED SAIGON ON JULY 1. THE FOLLOWING DESCRIPTION OF THE PRG'S NEW CAPITOL WAS RELATED TO A CONGEN OFFICER DURING THE GIRL'S VISIT TO HONG KONG. END SUMMARY

1. SAIGON IS A SAD PLACE TO LIVE. MOST OF THE TRAFFIC IS GONE AND SO IS THE LIFE OF THE CITY. WOMEN ARE PROHIBITED FROM WEARING WESTERN STYLE CLOTHING AND EVEN THE TRADITIONAL AO DAI IS BANNED EXCEPT FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN. THERE IS PLENTY OF FOOD IN THE MARKET PLACE BUT THEY ARE MANY UNEMPLOYED WITHOUT MONEY TO BUY THE FOOD. THE NEW GOVERNMENT HAS FORCED MANY RESIDENTS TO DEPART THE CITY AND WORK THE RICE FIELDS IN THE CONFIDENTIAL

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COUNTRYSIDE. THE JOBLESS(ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO FORMERLY

WORKED FOR AMERICANS) ARE THE PRIME TARGETS FOR REMOVAL TO THE PROVINCES. IN THE HOPES OF AVOIDING BEING SHIPPED OUT, MANY SAIGONESE HAVE RESORTED TO ERECTING SMALL RESTAURANTS OR STANDS SELLING A FEW ITEMS THERBY ESTABLISHING THEIR "BUSINESS" IN THE CITY. A FEW BARS REMAIN OPEN BUT THESE ARE FREQUENTED ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY BY CADRE OF THE LIBERATION ARMY.

- 2. INCIDENTS HAVE BEEN OBSERVED OF STREET PEDDLERS AND PEDICAB DRIVERS COMLAINING TO THE PRG TROOPS FOR HAVING RUINED THE ECONOMY. ONE PEDICAB DRIVER REPORTEDLY LAMENTED THAT PRIOR TO "LIBERATION" THEY COULD MAY \$VN 1000 A DAY BUT NOW THEY ARE LUCKY IF THEY MAKE \$VN 300 THOUGH PRICES HAVE REMAINED THE SAME.
- 3. THE SOVIET FLAG NOW FLIES OVER THE FORMER U.S. EMBASSY AND RUSSIANS ARE A COMMON SIGHT IN THE CITY. THE PRC OCCUPIES THE FORMER TAIWAN EMBASSY AND USAID -I IS THE DSTRICT HEAD-QUARTERS FOR PRG SECURITY. MOST FOREMER AMERICAN QUARTERS ARE OCCUPIED BY THE LIBERATION ARMY. FOREIGN BUSINESS SUCH AS THE FRENCH SOFT DRINK AND BEER FIRM, BGI, ARE STILL CONTROLLED BY THEIR OWNERS BUT CADRE WERE BEING ASSIGNED TO STUDY TO MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS.
- 4. SAIGON TELEVISION GENERALLY BROADCASTS FROM 1900-2100 HOURS CARRYING GOVERNMENT PROPAGANDA AND CULTURAL FILMS. TWO WELL KNOWN VIETNAMESE ACTRESSES, THAN THUY HANG AND KIM CUONG HAVE APPEARED ON TV AS VC CADRE. HANG, HE WIFE OF FORMER PRIME MINISTER NGUGEN NGOC OANH, WAS INTRODUCED AS A FULL COLONEL WHO HAS SERVED THE REVOLUTION FOR TWENTY YEARS.
- 5. COORUPTION IS STILL COMMON. ALTHOUGH THE BANKS ERE CLOSED, ACCOUNT HOLDERS COULD WITHDRAW AS MUCH AS THEY WISHED AS LONG AS THEY SPLIT WITH THE CADRE. GASOLINE WAS RARE BUT COULD BE OBTAINED FROM THE CADRE FOR A PRICE. BLACK-MARKET CURRENCY OPERATIONS CONTINUED AND PIASTERS WERE SELLING AT \$VN 1500 TO THE US DOLLAR. THE PRICE OOR A VIETNAMESE TO GET OUT OF VIET NAM WAS \$VN 10 MILLION.
- 6. THERE ARE CONTINUED REPORTS OF RESIDTANCE BY ARVN SOLDIERS AND MILITARY INCIDENTS HAVE OCCURRED AS CLOSE AS CONFIDENTIAL.

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GO VAP ON SAIGON'S OUTSKIRTS.

7. PEOPLE ARE PERMIITED TO TRAVEL FREELY WITHIN SAIGON BUT PERMISSION IS REQUIRED TO TRAVEL TO OTHER TOWNS AND THE TAVELERS MUST INDIATE WHEN HE EPCPECTS TO RETURN. MALES REQUESTING PERMISSION TO TRAVEL ARE ESPECIALLY SCRUTINIZED. GROUPS OF FAMILIES HAVE BEEN ORGANIZED TOGERHER AS A PART OF THE SECURITY CONTROLS. INDIVIDUALS ARE ASSIGNED TO GROUPS ACCORDING TO AGE

AND ARE REQUIRED TO ATTEND INDOCTRINATION COURSES.

8. PERSONS GIVEN PERMISSION TO DEPART THE COUNTRY ARE PROHIBITIED FROM TAKING OUT MORE THAN \$500 IN US DOLLARS. ANYTHING EXCEEDING \$500 IS TAKEN AND A RECEIPT IS ISSUED PROMISING EVENTUAL RETURN. ALL PERSONS INCLUDING DIPLOMATS ARE GIVEN A THROUGH BODY SEARCH BEFORE DEPARTURE.

9. THERE HAVE BEEN NO MASS PUBLIC EXECUTIONS IN SAIGON. THERE IS HOWEVER, CONSIDERABLE CONCERN OVER PERSONS WHO HABE BEEN SENT OFF FOR "RE-EDUCATION" AND HAVE NOT YET RETURNED. LOOTERS HAVE BEEN EXECUTED ON THE SPOT. THE SOURCE WAS AWARE OF ONE ARMY MEDICAL OFFICER WHO WAS EXECUTED IN FRONTOF HER HOME FOR NOT HAVING REPORTED FOR REEDUCATION THE PREVIOUS DAY. CROSS

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